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MONDAY, JUNE 13TH, 1853.

THOMAS ROMNEY ROBINSON, D. D., PRESIDENT,
in the Chair.

EUGENE CURRY, Esq., was elected a Member of the Academy.

Dr. Todd exhibited to the Academy an ancient Irish reliquary, composed of brass and silver, of exquisite workmanship. It represents a human arm, with closed hand, and is believed to have contained portions of the hand or arm of St. Lachtîn [*pr.* Lachteen], abbot or bishop of Achadh-ur [Fresh-field, now by an erroneous translation called Freshford], in the county of Kilkenny.

St. Lachtîn was a native of Muscraighe (now Muskerry), in the county of Cork, and was descended from the royal family of Conaire II., King of Ireland in the second century. He died, according to the Annals of the Four Masters, in the year 622; and his memory was venerated by the Irish Church on the 19th of March.

This curious reliquary is now the property of Andrew Fountaine, Esq., of Narford Hall, near Swaffham, Norfolk, and has been in the possession of his family for many years. The opportunity of exhibiting it to the Academy has been procured through the influence of Lord Talbot de Malahide, by whom it has been borrowed from its owner, to be exhibited with the Academy's Museum at the Great Exhibition.

It has already been engraved, and a short account of it printed in the *Vetusta Monumenta*, published by the Society of Antiquaries of London; but the interpretation there given of the inscriptions upon it is full of inaccuracies. It had been previously exhibited to that Society by Sir Andrew Fountaine in 1829.

There are four inscriptions, on plates of brass, running

longitudinally down the arm: of these but one is perfect; the other three are illegible at the end, but enough still remains to enable us to fix with certainty the date of this singular specimen of ancient Irish art, and to ascertain the part of Ireland in which it was made. They have been deciphered by Mr. Curry, so far as any traces of the letters still remain, and are as follow:—

First Inscription.

OṚ bo Maelpechnaill u cellachaī bo ap̄p̄r̄ig ua [nechach mumain] bo p̄ign̄ in cumtachpo.

“A prayer for Maelseachnaill O’Callaghan, chief-king of Ua [Echach Mumhain], who made this reliquary.”

The words enclosed in brackets are not very distinct in the inscription, and are in some degree conjectural, supplied from our knowledge of the fact that this personage was lord of that district, and confirmed by observing that the space left doubtful by the obliteration of the words in the original exactly agrees with what would be required for the words supplied.

Mealseachnaill O’Callaghain died, according to the Four Masters, in 1121.

Second Inscription.

OṚ bo chopmac m̄c meic cap̄thaiḡi bo p̄ig b̄āna mumān bo-
pat b̄ t̄

“A prayer for Cormac son of Mac Carthy, Righdamhna [or next heir] of Munster, who gave”

This was the Cormac who was king-bishop of Ireland, as he is called by the Four Masters, and who built the celebrated Cormac’s chapel on the Rock of Cashel. The Four Masters mention him, at the year 1137, as having made a predatory excursion against Kennedy O’Brien, and the foreigners or Danes of Limerick; and in the following year they record his treacherous murder by Toirdhealbach (or Turlogh), son of Diarmaid O’Brien, and the two sons of O’Connor Kerry. They

speak of him as celebrated “for bestowing of jewels and wealth upon the clergy and the churches, an improver of territories and churches,” so that it is in strict accordance with this character to find his name on the richly ornamented reliquary before us.

Third Inscription.

OR̄ do cābꝰ mē meic capthaigī do rīg

“A prayer for Tadhg son of Mac Carthy Righ[damhna of Munster]”

The letters rīg are probably the commencement of rīg-damhna mumain, a title which belonged to this Tadhg, grandson of Carthy, who was brother of Cormac, of whom we have just spoken.

Fourth Inscription.

Oṝ do diarmait mac meic denisc do comarba ṽ

“A prayer for Diarmait, son of Mac Denisc, comharb of L”

It is greatly to be regretted that the next word is not legible, as it would probably have given us the name of the Saint whose relics were contained in this reliquary. The first letter seems to be ṽ, in which case it was probably Lachtin.

Smith, in his History of Cork (vol. i. p. 84), mentions a reliquary called the Arm of St. Lachteen, which in his time was preserved at Donoghmore, in the county of Cork, by the Roman Catholic priest of the parish, and tells us that the people used to swear on it on solemn occasions, until it was removed by the Roman Catholic bishop, who probably found that a superstitious abuse of it had grown up.

Mr. Curry also states that he remembers to have met with a person of that country, whose habit it was to swear by the arm of St. Lachtin, although he was unable to tell what the arm was.

All these circumstances, and the fact that St. Lachtin was a native of the same country, render it highly probable that